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Our Young People. Mothers & Daughters in Council.

The world did not concern itself much about our bringing up in my day, but, now, there is no escape from the 'Education Question'; the journals are full of it, people talk of little else, imposing buildings, Board Schools or High Schools, rise on all sides, & improving young persons correct one's old-fashioned ideas with scanty ceremony."

"Well, Mother, what do you think of it all? We live in the midst of this educational whirl, & the children devote themselves to school work as men do to the business of life; they are admirably taught, & would not willingly neglect a preparation or miss a lesson. Full of purpose & effort, they are engrossed with affairs that I have as little to do with as with their father's office business; and yet, I believe, they miss much the boys & I had in our home training. & that you, dear Mother, seem to have had still more in your quiet home."

They do they miss their Mother; you married early, & began with a nurse so capable that you gave the children up to her; she was followed by instructors, as capable in their

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in Part,

way ~~at the~~ it has come to pass that you
have all along been giving place to some
'superior person'.

A true bill, I fear, but, to begin with the
nursery, she was very kind, & I do think
cared for the children. Besides, she took
excellent care of their health, a great matter
to one who knew so little about children's
ailments. Had you been at hand, things
might have been different.

O yes, Child, I know; you have always
been over-diffident, & your very regard
for this foolish old Mother of yours has
kept you from having needful confidence
in yourself. I am much to blame
that the pleasure I took in my gentle
daughters blinded me to her deficiencies;
you went to your new life sadly
ignorant in many ways.

Each one now, Mother, it will be up-hill
work, but there are still three babes in the
nursery; something may be done with
them. & I have not succeeded with the
elders. Good and sweet children as
they are, they have taken themselves out
of my hands; not that they do much that
is wrong, but they do what is right in
their own eyes; I mean, when they do
right, it is because it pleases them, not
from any sense of duty or thought of pleasing
their

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their father or me. He is little at home, and
sees nothing wrong, but is proud of the
children; ~~seeing they do well at school~~
~~and are sweetly busy with their books at~~
~~home.~~ And, indeed, you must not think
they are bad; ~~children~~, no mother could
have seven brighter, more affectionate
boys & girls.

"I am proud of my grand children, too,
their force & sprightliness, their very independence
of character, so charm me. I am only
afraid of swimming with the stream; most
likely I should soon retire from my
duty & leave the young people to bring
up themselves."

"That is what troubles me; I have, unconsciously,
retired from my duty; but, indeed, it is
not easy to keep up with what somebody
calls the fo of the nineteenth century.
Then, what is a Mother's duty in these
days? Should she set her face against
all the influences about them, & try
to train her children after the traditions
of her own youth?"

"No; I have seen Mother do that, & do
it successfully, but children so trained
grow up behind the times, then young
people pronounce them 'stagnant' & leave
them to themselves, so they become more
than ever formal & dull, & out of sympathy
with

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with the stirring interests about them. Hence, there is a reluctance in supposing that the ways of our youth must be the best ways; we & the children will be losers if we do not believe that God is educating the world; teaching, now, more & better things than belonged to our youth, which things must be left open to receive."

"I do not see any way yet; this overpowering rush of new knowledge, new ideas, on the subject of education has, indeed, caused me to allow more advanced persons to take the children in hand. It is all beyond me."

"Now, a Mother departs her responsibility to other persons?"

How far parents are concerned with the education of their children, in what way they are pledged to keep up with the young generation, becomes a grave question when we have to deal with a Young England, not overdone with reverence, & fully ready to depend upon, assert, & glorify itself. A new & remarkable age, truly, we are living in; courage, honesty, enterprise, & other virtues clear to it, ^{get} shining in the virgin soil; but it would be a pity to lose ~~something~~ more retiring graces. The fact is, the elder generation cannot easily keep up with the advancing tide of opinion, so, while they fall to the rear, the children go forward, following any lead in their way; parents must see to it that they begin with a 'good start'. It keeps ahead, if they would not be deprived of their natural & honourable office. If only men

men & women did not launch themselves
on the most important of all careers without
the knowledge, power or purpose which
should qualify them for it! A joiner
a Carpenter, a Doctor, must be brought
up to his business, but because a
man who chooses may take up the
vocation of fatherhood, very few take
any pains to fit themselves for the
duties of this calling."

"I hardly see what-qualification could
be required; a father should be a wise
& upright man, no doubt; but is not
that every man's positive duty? In his
relative duty, as a father he does but
give out whatever of wisdom or goodness
is in him."

"He should at least know something
of the very composite nature of a child,
should have considered what education
ought to effect, & have made up his
mind to his own part in the training
of a family. People are beginning to see
that this kind of special preparation is
to be desired for all teachers; how much
more valuable would it be to parents, under
whose hands their children first take form."

"But there is a difference between parent
& teachers. Does not the sympathy with her
children & the natural insight which comes
to a mother stand her instead of much of this
difficult

"Difficult-lore, this deep reading is much thinking which it is rather appalling to think of? Then how could poor uneducated parents ever do well under such conditions?"

"Parents are, so many well believe, helped from above in a peculiar way; but ignorance is seldom docile; wherefore, in spite of all guiding, many do, as a fact, go ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ ^{indulge} or stubbornly wrong in their treatment of their children. This may account for what has been set down to the discredit of religion, that ~~many~~ ^{may be} a good man's life has ~~been~~ made wretched by unworthy children: he has not known what was in them or how to train them, & the Nemesis which always punishes ignorance of a natural law has but come after him.

"For the poor, who does not regret the ill-effects of their untaught condition, the bad habits, the want of principle, which ^{too often} make servants a ~~constant~~ trial & fill the Sunday School teacher with dismay.

"But am I right in thinking that the remedy you suggest would involve a course of reading ⁱⁿ the Moral & in Physical Sciences such as few middle class people would have time for, & which seems to me utterly beyond the reach of the labouring poor? Surely the spread of Christianity could avail more, after
all

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all, than a wider knowledge of the principles
of education."

"Christianity should constrain a man to
do well what he knows how to do, but does
not instruct him in any workman's art,
does not make a man a tailor, or a woman
a cook. A man must be a Christian
to be capable of educating his children
in the fullest sense; yet, being this,
loving the truth & hating a lie, he may,
for want of other knowledge, bring up
his children to deceive themselves
& him: into formalism, latitudes,
over-strictness, he may ignorantly err.
It is a man's duty to know; & therefore
I think, we are not allowed to suppose
that ^{any proper one} ~~divine grace~~ ^{will be used} will supplement our
ignorance. Nor is the love in question
really deep & difficult; physiology,
theology, oriental & moral science, all
that, it is true, with the nature, well-being
& relations of human beings, & there cover
a wide field; but the broad principles
which should regulate action are not
far to seek; & it is much to be desired
that these should be brought home in
simple, forcible words to the 'unlearned &
ignorant'; so that every man should
at least know that is due to the whole
nature

